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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 001238

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR A/S FRAZER, S/E WILLIAMSON, AND AF/SPG
NSC FOR PITTMAN AND HUDSON
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU

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TAGS: [ASEC](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KPKO](#) [UN](#) [AU](#) [SU](#)
SUBJECT: SE WILLIAMSON'S MEETING WITH MINISTER OF FINANCE
DR. AWAD AHMED ALJAZ

REF: KHARTOUM 1215

Classified By: CDA Alberto M. Fernandez, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: On 14 August Special Envoy for Sudan Richard Williamson met with Dr. Awad Ahmed Aljaz, the Minister of Finance and close confidante of President Bashir. Aljaz dismissed SE Williamson's concerns about oil revenue sharing as unfounded and asserted that all the real problems in Sudan emanate from its poor relationship with the United States. Expressing a profound bafflement and frustration with continued USG sanctions and perceived broken promises, Aljaz implored SE Williamson for a clear answer on what Sudan must do to achieve normal relations. He expressed doubt that the USG was truly committed to such a goal, noting how Sudan has developed good relations with China despite greater cultural differences. SE Williamson acknowledged that neither side had lived up to all of its commitments, but reassured Aljaz of the USG desire to improve bilateral ties. He stated that the USG recognizes the GOS as an important strategic partner, and seeks to work with it to alleviate human suffering and increase security in the region. When queried by SE Williamson on how to best to erase confusion about USG intentions and improve the bilateral relationship, Aljaz suggested that each side make a list of its goals as a starting point and compare notes. End Summary.

¶2. (U) SE Williamson met with Minister of Finance Dr. Awad Ahmed Aljaz on August 14 in Khartoum. CDA Fernandez, State/L Christine Sanford, and SE Staff Assistants also attended; poloff served as notetaker.

¶3. (C) SE Williamson recounted his trip to Abyei (reftel) and expressed concern about the lack of progress on oil revenue sharing there. Aljaz quickly denied that there was any problem, and asserted that concerns about oil revenue sharing--along with concerns about Abyei, Darfur, elections, and so forth--were simply misplaced because Sudan is fully capable of solving its internal problems. Instead, he said, "the real issue is whether or not the US wants to make good relations with Sudan." Visibly distraught with the effect that U.S. sanctions are having on Sudan's economic development, and in particular the absence of US oil firms here, Aljaz implored SE Williamson to be frank and open about what the GOS must do to improve bilateral ties. "I don't know why you create these problems for us," he said. "So let us start from the right place. Forget Abyei, and tell us what is the problem you have with us."

¶4. (C) Aljaz went on to accuse the USG of acting in bad faith, claiming that GOS has done everything asked of it, but that the USG has not reciprocated. "You said if we signed (the CPA) you would provide debt relief and funds for development, but we haven't seen it," he complained.

Regarding the DPA, he noted that the USG had promised that non-signatories would be punished after they refused to make peace in 2006, but had since invited them to Washington, providing them legitimacy and media coverage. Aljaz said that as a result, he questioned whether the USG truly wants better relations or whether it has an agenda "to crush us or destroy us." SE Williamson assured Aljaz that the USG had no such agenda, but Aljaz remained incredulous. "Perhaps in your inner heart you want better relations," he said. "but your actions do not show it." When CDA Fernandez noted that the same could be said of the GOS, Aljaz retorted that the USG is a superpower and if it wanted to move the bilateral relationship forward it was fully capable of doing so. "The issue is with the U.S. and not with us," he said, noting that Sudan has succeeded in fostering relations with China, despite greater cultural differences than with the US.

15. (C) In response to Aljaz's relatively good natured tirade, SE Williamson assured him that the USG was not interested in regime change, but rather the alleviation of human suffering. "We think we have been straightforward about the obstacles to better relations," he said, noting how he repeatedly focused on humanitarian relief during prior bilateral talks. He acknowledged that there were many forces at work beyond the control of the GOS, but that there are practical steps that could be taken to relieve humanitarian suffering in Abyei and in Darfur. Aljaz, however, remained unconvinced. "You mention Abyei - it is nothing but a small village with no connection to the rest of the country until the NCP connected it and provided infrastructure and services," he said. "there is no problem there. There are historic good relations between the Misseriya and Dinka, who intermarry with each other." And in

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Darfur, he said, people are in IDP camps simply "to take advantage of free food and medicine." He stated that such problems could be solved without external forces, but that the bilateral problem required new discourse and action. He added that Sudan was on the whole a very safe place, much more than Los Angeles, where he spent six years as a student, but "your policies are creating hatred towards you among the people." Aljaz acknowledged that both the USG and the GOS must overcome significant political, cultural and societal differences, but stated that the onus was on the USG to express what it wants with renewed clarity. When queried by SE Williamson on the best way to start a discussion, Aljaz responded that each side should make a list of grievances, compare notes and proceed to negotiate.

16. (C) Comment: The capable and cynical Aljaz is among the closest advisors to President Bashir, and of all the views SE Williamson has heard on his trip to date (prior to the Nafie meeting, reported septel,) Aljaz's unvarnished and dismissive statements are likely the most reflective of the President's and inner circle's views. Whether Aljaz is unwilling or unable to believe that the USG is genuinely motivated by human suffering, his trivializing of USG concerns is evidence that the two sides remain far apart in mutual understanding. The US-educated Aljaz's world view underscored the tunnel vision of a regime that is not reflexively anti-American but also often incapable of recognizing its own flaws (let alone crimes and abuses against its own people).

17. (U) SE Williamson did not see this cable prior to transmission.
FERNANDEZ